

To: Commerce Committee, Michigan House of Representatives

From: Bruce Carr, private citizen in Farmington Hills, MI

Date: June 26, 2007

Subject: Another reason to support H.B. 4163 for healthier work environments and public places

I am here in memory of my mother who died of Alzheimer's disease. I retired from teaching high school social studies earlier than expected so as to be able to help take care of her in her final two years and honor her desire of not having to go into a nursing home. Two weeks ago I was also here to testify but did not have the opportunity to do so then.

The chances are that most, if not all, of you and everyone else in this room knows someone who has Alzheimer's or has died of it. Very few forms of death are more feared. I would not want to see anyone else get Alzheimer's, and I am sure that none of you would either.

According to a study by a University of California at Berkley statistician (whose name is Thaddeus Haight) and presented to the American Academy of Neurology when they met in Boston last month, **long-term exposure to tobacco smoke can cause a 30% increase in the risk of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.**

Bill Theis, vice-president for medical and scientific affairs at the Alzheimer's Association is quoted as saying "It's reasonable to suppose that anything that is bad for your heart is bad for your brain, so it is no great surprise that secondhand smoke could be responsible for the development of carotid artery disease and dementias of all kinds."

I attached a copy of the summary of that report which I pulled off of the website for the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health.

This information has not been printed on the cigarette packages or in cigarette advertising yet, but I feel that it belongs there. Even if it were not for all of the other dangers caused by secondhand smoke, this would be enough to warrant lots of attention.

People who earn their living by working as servers in restaurants and bars – and other people who work in environments where tobacco smoke is frequently found – should not have to choose between their employment and their health. Many are supporting children and youth. We all know that it's not easy to go from one job to another – especially in the current economic climate.

I urge you to think of someone who has or had Alzheimer's and also to think of what you can do to help prevent this terrible disease. Then please vote to approve H.B. 4163 so that Michigan can join the 31 other states and several countries that put top priority on a healthier environment for everyone.

Thank you very much.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Bruce Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "H. Bruce" and the last name "Carr" clearly distinguishable.

H. Bruce Carr

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Secondhand Smoke Boosts Risk for Alzheimer's

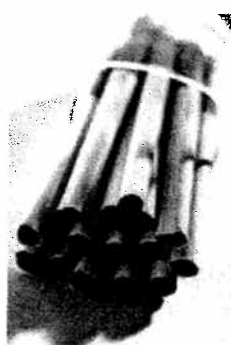
Dementia 30% more common in those with long exposures, researchers say

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_48658.html (*this news item will not be available after 07/30/2007)

HealthDay

HealthDay

Tuesday, May 1, 2007



TUESDAY, May 1 (HealthDay News) — Breathing in secondhand smoke could raise your risk for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, a new study finds.

It's the first study to link secondhand smoke to this form of mental deterioration, said lead researcher Thaddeus Haight, a research statistician at the University of California, Berkeley.

"There have been studies that have shown that exposure to secondhand smoke is related to subclinical cardiovascular disease and clinical cardiovascular disease," Haight noted. "There also have been studies showing that atherosclerosis, hardening of the arteries, is related to an increased risk of dementia."

The current study completes the loop by showing that inhaling someone else's smoke increases the incidence of dementia, he said.

"This study attempts to look at the relationship between cardiovascular disease and dementia and also looks at the independent, direct effects of tobacco on the nervous system," Haight said. "There is an alternative pathway other than cardiovascular disease with potential neurotoxic effects. Secondhand smoke could affect the neurodegenerative process behind dementia and may lower the threshold for dementia-like symptoms."

Haight was scheduled to present the findings this week at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology, in Boston.

In their study, the Berkeley team evaluated data on more than 3,600 participants enrolled in a long-running study of cardiovascular health. They compared 985 never-smokers with no cardiovascular disease and no dementia to 495 people who reported an average of 28 years of lifetime exposure to another person's smoking.

A six-year evaluation revealed that elderly people exposed to secondhand smoke for 30 years or more were about 30 percent more likely to develop dementia than those without such exposure, the researchers said.

"We're now looking at how smoke affected dementia directly and are also attempting to separate out the effects of secondhand smoke that occur through clinical vascular disease," Haight said.

Analysis of the data showed that the combination of long-term exposure to secondhand smoke and the presence of cardiovascular disease nearly doubled the risk of dementia. Long-term exposure to secondhand smoke alone increased

the risk of dementia by about a third.

The study also found a greater incidence of dementia in people who were not diagnosed with cardiovascular disease but who had detectable abnormalities of their carotid arteries, the main arteries to the brain, on ultrasound images. People exposed to secondhand smoke who had those abnormalities (such as narrowed carotid arteries) were 2.5 times more likely to develop dementia as those with no carotid abnormalities and no secondhand smoke exposure.

The study results provide support for efforts to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, such as bans on smoking in restaurants and bars, Haight said.

"It's reasonable to suppose that anything that is bad for your heart is bad for your brain, so it is no great surprise that secondhand smoke could be responsible for development of carotid artery disease and dementias of all kinds," said Bill Thies, vice president for medical and scientific affairs at the Alzheimer's Association.

The exact degree of danger is somewhat unclear, because the data in the report are not complete, but the danger does exist, Thies said.

"This study is an important addition to the overwhelming evidence of serious health harms from secondhand smoke," said Matthew L. Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "It underscores the need for all states to pass comprehensive smoke-free laws covering all workplaces and public places."

HealthDay

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Related MedlinePlus Pages:

- Alzheimer's Disease - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/alzheimersdisease.html>
- Dementia - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/dementia.html>
- Secondhand Smoke - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/secondhandsmoke.html>

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